

2118584823

HS 397 R8774 1926 MAIN



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS
AT
AUSTIN

University of Texas

LIBRARY

T366.104
R915

THE GREAT BAN

A STUDY
In Masonic Interpretation



PUBLISHED BY
LYMAN BRIGHTMAN RUSSELL
COMANCHE, TEXAS

THE GREAT BAN

A STUDY
IN MASONIC INTERPRETATION



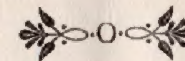
PUBLISHED
NOVEMBER, 1926

COPYRIGHT, 1926
LYMAN BRIGHTMAN RUSSELL
COMANCHE, TEXAS

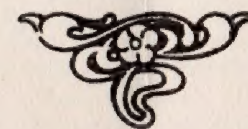
PRINTED BY
THE COMANCHE PUBLISHING CO
COMANCHE, TEXAS

TO THE MEMORY OF

Cyrus W. Egery



THE AGED BROTHER MASON OF SEVENTY, WHO SO
KINDLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSTRUCTED
ME AS AN ENTERED APPRENTICE AND FEL-
LOWCRAFT FIFTY-FOUR YEARS AGO,
AND WAS SHORTLY AFTERWARD
TRANSLATED TO
MEMBERSHIP IN THE SUPREME GRAND
LODGE ABOVE WHERE PEACE
FOREVER REIGNS,
THIS BROCHURE IS DEDICATED IN LOVING
MEMORY BY THE AUTHOR



During fifty-four years of active affiliation with the American Rite of Masonry I have given much of my scant leisure to a study of its significance. These diversions have been made without access to vast stores of Masonic literature and with only moderate attainments in scholarship. They have also been at odd intervals by one whose time has been mostly required to meet the issues of life. They are therefore the result principally of casual reading and occasional note-taking in non-Masonic histories, comparative religion and ritual and etymologies, independent of opinions already formed and given by outstanding Masonic students, for all of whom I entertain the highest respect, but whose works in detail have not been accessible. It would therefore be presumptuous in me to pretend to a broad knowledge of the history of the Order such as that possessed by Hughan, Pound, Newton, Haywood and many other shining lights in Mystic lore.

Still, there are many questions connected with the Order that are yet on debatable ground, and this condition will probably continue as to some of them, because nearly all known sources of information have been thoroughly sifted by the most brilliant minds of the fraternity, and the brethren of the earlier ages of operative Masonry were too much steeped through and through with the obligation of secrecy to commit things to writing that are regarded today as being legitimate subjects of public discussion. In such cases, one man has as good right as another to delve into whatever sources may be available and make his own inferences. Whether his conclusions are well-grounded or fanciful and far-fetched will be passed upon by the highest intelligence of the Order and out of all the venturesome guesses possibly a grain of golden truth may be unearthed. Perhaps I should add to avoid suspicion of pretending to greater scholarship than that to which I am justly entitled, that my references to Hebrew and Aryan, wherever they may occur, are all derived at secondhand, although to save time and space I have written as if such references were the products of my own knowledge. Speaking generally they are sustained by authorities that I know to be reliable and authentic. With an earnest desire to impart as well as to receive more light and knowledge, although with a feeling of some diffidence, I submit my speculations to the fraternity for whatever they may ultimately prove to be worth.

—THE AUTHOR.



ABOUT SYMBOLISM

A symbol, as used in its Masonic sense, is a material object or physical phenomenon diverted from its mere bodily significance to stand for and represent an intellectual, moral, or spiritual idea, to which the thing symbolized is imagined to exhibit an analogy. As a necessary sequence, the word-sign denoting such object or phenomenon, either spoken or written, along with pictorial representations thereof, also becomes a symbol to represent the same idea. Briefly stated, a symbol represents some supposed analogy between the visible things revealed to us through outer sense and the invisible things of which our only conception is derived from inner sense and consciousness.

Symbols are not merely convenient and expedient; they are indispensable. This may not seem apparent at first sight. But all spoken language consists of arbitrary word-signs which in their original adoption represented only the impressions of outer sense. It would be impossible even to begin the construction of spoken language without the consensus of two or more individuals, since the purpose of word-signs is to enable one individual to communicate ideas to another. To obtain and establish the consensus or agreement to use a word-sign so that both the speaker and the hearer shall be able to identify its meaning, that is, to understand it in the same sense, to apply it to the same thing, both parties must first visualize the thing signified by the word. The outlines of a cow or of a landscape must be previously understood in a general way by both individuals before they can understand and apprehend the meaning of the words "cow" and "landscape." There is no difficulty in thus adopting an arbitrary word-sign for the impressions of outer sense, because the same outlines are revealed to both speaker and hearer, under normal conditions, in exactly the same image or form.

But thought, reason, life, good, evil, and abstract qualities and things generally, are imageless to begin with; and then, again, it is impossible for the mind of one individual to take sensible cognizance of the contents of the mind of another.

Moreover, the human mind has to develop considerably in the knowledge of sensible things, all of which knowledge is made definite by the use of word-signs, before it begins to take cognizance of abstract ideas. When abstract truths are first conceived, there is no language for expressing them and they cannot be photographed into pictures that may be visualized by others. The only possible manner of conveying them from the subjective to the objective mind is by selecting words representing something known by outer sense that in one or more aspects suggests analogy, and there is frequently difficulty, both in selecting a proper analogy and in making this analogy plain to the receiving mind. It is through such difficult processes that man has succeeded in cultivating, enlarging and perpetuating a knowledge of abstract truths from one generation to another. Every word used in any language to express spiritual truth was originally used to denote some particular impression of outer sense. For example, "Spirit" meant a breathing, something in the nature of a material but invisible movement of air. So with the Greek "*Pneuma*," and so on, through the entire field of spiritual language.

The fact that no preconcerted agreement can be had for language to express moral and spiritual ideals because such ideals must be expressed in words the meaning of which is known beforehand, and that the only words known are used to denote something outside of us, makes the use of analogies indispensable. But although indispensable, we are confronted with the difficulty which subsists in many minds for lack of imagination, of making the analogy plain to the receiving mind. All great spiritual teachers have been compelled to use tropes, figures, allegories, parables, and the like because of the absence of a specifically spiritual language, and have also encountered this dullness of apprehension. Jesus spoke of those who, "having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not" the great truths he taught. Paul cautioned the churches against interpreting his expressions too literally, for "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Even today, in the most

enlightened period of all history, literalism is one of the greatest obstacles to the development of spiritual and moral truth.

This necessity for employing symbolic language in one form or another taken from the outer visible and material world accounts for the fact that most, if not all the great religions of the world have been propagated among the masses by myth or legend, exemplified frequently by a drama canonizing or deifying some central character supposed to have achieved holiness through a life of self-denial and suffering and to have been translated to a paradise of the gods at his death. The early Christians were initiated into the church through some such ritual, and a semblance of such a formality is still retained by the ritualistic churches. Out of the myth or legend, as it develops itself, and concurrently with it, is evolved a philosophy of life, a theology, a system of ethics and a code of practical morality. The fundamental creed and dogmatics of such churches are called symbols, which is a somewhat different sense of the word from that in which it is applied to Masonic lore. The legend of the third degree in Masonry is symbolic in its entirety, and the central facts and figure are the same, furnishing the same analogy regardless of the infinitely varying details in the form and verbage of the ritual. The great lesson intended to be taught by it is that of self-mastery, self-control, self-denial of the individual for the welfare of the community. It symbolizes the perfect life which devotes itself to duty regardless of selfish considerations, and meets death calmly and heroically rather than continue life at the expense of personal integrity. Perhaps we might also say that to some degree the legend symbolizes the doctrine of resurrection and a future life.

While there are many symbols touched upon by Masonry, the three great foundation words of symbolism upon which almost the entire superstructure is based are *Light*, *Word*, and *Building*. Of these comes the designation of God as the Supreme Architect of the Universe, the infinite and eternal *Builder*, both of the visible cosmos and of perfect human char-

acter. Among Christian Masons the Holy Bible is the Great Light in Masonry, which reveals to us how the Great Builder spoke the words "*Be Light*," and "*Light was*." I am informed that the Hebrew Scriptures give this command in only two words, while our King James version in English uses four. Perhaps the best approximate meaning rendered in English would be as I have first stated it.

Of course we cannot be rigidly scientific in our discussions, and the question whether light, matter and energy were called into existence or are coeternal with God Himself is irrelevant. Whatever may be the reader's view upon such a question, the cosmos is constantly in motion and ever changing its forms, and it is this never-ending change of form that lies at the basis of all human life and human action, and upon which all symbols are built up and established. Whatever may have been God's method of bringing the world into existence, we know that it is now a process of building from the material already at hand, and that under all physical and mathematical laws known to us it is impossible to make something out of nothing. We also know that the infinitely varying phenomena, the development of worlds as well as of the smallest life cell is a matter of growth similar to building. Neither plants, animals, nor worlds are jumped into a full-grown existence, but are begun by the addition and multiplication of atoms, germs, or molecules, and are gradually enlarged, by accumulation, both as to size and as to complexity. All this takes time, from a few moments to millions of years. Hence the Masonic usage of symbolizing God as the Supreme Builder, or Architect, is eminently fitting and proper, and lies at the foundation of all other symbols. It is by keeping this fundamental symbol constantly in mind that I have been led to the speculations which follow.

The Symbolism of a Lodge

"Whence come you?" So far as I know, this is the first question of the first section of the lecture in the First degree of Masonry in all the American jurisdictions, and the very natural answer is no secret—that the Entered Apprentice questioned came from a *Lodge*. But what is a *Lodge*? Of course there is a prosaic answer given to this question later on, to the effect that a *Lodge* is either a place where Masons meet, or the name given to the assembly of Masons who meet to work. But it will be necessary to remove considerable rubbish which has lain at the very threshold of definitions up to the present moment. My latest reading is the 1925 edition of "*Masonry Defined*," of which Bros. C. S. Lippincott, 33°, and E. R. Johnston, 32°, are the authors and compilers. These brethren appear to have made an exhaustive examination of Masonic authorities and the outcome is an invaluable source of encyclopedic information for the average member of the Order. But they have accepted what they have found, just as we all have to do in making compilations, and their articles on the derivation and meaning of the word *Lodge* is merely a repetition of the error into which lexicographers generally have fallen. They agree in deriving the word *Lobby* from Middle Age Latin *Laubia* and making it cognate with *Lodge*. There is really no connection however, between the two. This confusion has befogged the significance of *Lodge*.

Laubia is never found in classic Latin. It was borrowed from the Gothic *Lauf*, meaning a leaf, as of a tree, from which our own "leaf" is derived through the Germanic tongues. In its plural form, *Laubiae*, as denoting foliage generally, it easily came to mean a forest or grove, and thence by another easy transition, an artificial bower or arbor, such as oldtime revival meetings were held under during the summer season. From this it was extended to express a public meeting place, and is now used in English in the form of *Lobby* to denote the public portion of large hotels, legislative halls, etc.

The somewhat similar, yet broadly different meaning of *Lodge* is a mere coincidence. In primitive Greek *Logos* meant

simply *Word*, first a vocal, and later a written sign of an idea. Being a foundation word, it gradually expanded during the millenniums of Greek history by trope and symbolism to cover a multiplicity of meanings, as any one may see who consults a comprehensive Greek Lexicon. The supreme culmination of its expanded significance came in applying it to the infinite mind or reason that underlies all activity in the world about us from the fact that a word is the sign of an idea and ideas are impossible without intelligence. *Word*, therefore, ultimately came to mean that supreme intelligence that permeates time and space without end or limit—and comprehends *all* ideas, that is, God. The first passage in John's Gospel has made this usage familiar to everybody of primary school educational attainments: "In the beginning was the *Word*; and the *Word* was with God; and *God was the Word*." I am giving the passage in the same order it occurs in the Greek text.

A brief tracing of the evolutionary process from *Logos* to *Lodge* is necessary to show its real symbolism. As a preliminary remark applicable to this discussion and also to one in another connection hereafter, it should be observed that our G, the Greek Gamma and the Hebrew Gimel, were originally used to represent, not exactly the closed guttural sound of G as in English *gag*, *gig*, etc., but a sonant guttural. In literary English there is no sound exactly resembling it. In the Scottish dialect it is quite frequent, as is also the spirant guttural, the sonant G being represented in the last syllable of Edinburgh, where the throat is not entirely closed as in English, but is left slightly open so as to prolong a sound resembling the infantile "goo." The spirant guttural is heard in the Scottish *Loch*, and in the German *Acht*. This guttural aspirate and sonant requires greater effort than speech-sounds made with the tip of the tongue and palate or teeth; hence there is a frequent tendency to bring the speech-organs more to the front of the mouth, resulting in what in English is the sound of J in *jay*, or G in *George*, or of ch in *church*.

Bearing this in mind, we go back to the Greek *Logos*, which was probably pronounced originally as near as we can spell it in English, *Loghos*, *Word*. The next step is in the Greek derivatives, *Logeion* and *Logion*, both originally diminutives, meaning a little or short word. These diminutives came into acceptance to represent the divine oracle in the Greek religion, because the answer of the hierophant was always brief and frequently ambiguous. This diminutive *Logeion* is used in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, or Jewish Bible, to denote the breastplate of the Jewish high priest worn when he entered the Sanctum Sanctorum to consult Yahweh, and also to signify any utterance supposed to come from Yahweh. Also as an adjective, *Logios* meant learned in the hidden divine mysteries.

These words, *Logeion* and *Logion* were borrowed by the Romans, changing their termination in accordance with Latin usage to *Logium* and *Logeum*, and expanded to denote in classic Latin the place from which the divine oracle was spoken, that is, a platform, pulpit, or rostrum. The words thence enlarged to mean the stage of the theater where the actors spoke their words or parts in the drama. Continuing to find new applications as time passed, in Middle Age Italian, the daughter of classic Latin, the two diminutives were fused into a single word *Loggia*, to express the idea of an open gallery, porch, or portico, adjacent or attached to a palace or villa, where the occupants could sit in the evenings of Italy's balmy climate and exchange *words* of social intercourse, as in our *parlor*. The tendency already referred to to soften the guttural speech sound resulted in pronouncing *Loggia* as "lod-jah."

It was in the latter half of the Middle Ages that Christianity, made the religion of the Roman empire by Constantine, had become the world religion of the west and the consequent era of cathedral and church building arrived, requiring skilled stone-cutters by the thousands, and each great architectural structure took many months or years of time for its completion. To accommodate these armies of workmen, something

more than mere sunshade shelters became necessary. As the *Loggia*, gallery, or place of social gathering was outside of and sometimes apart from, the palatial building itself, the huts or temporary structures erected for the accommodation of the workmen as both working and dwelling places were also called *loggias*, the word still retaining something of its original significance in the minds of the people, as a place of social conversation. The seat of supreme church authority being at Rome, this usage began in Italy, where church architecture received its first great impulse, and spread out all over Europe, the word passing with the progress of building into the other countries, and varying in form to suit the usage of the vernacular. We derived it from the French *Loge*, with the advent of the Normans. The French pronunciation of the word was *Lozh*, with the short sound of O as in Lot. This sound of G (that of Z in *Azure*) was not known in early English, but the soft sound of G as in *Germ* was already established in the mixed vernacular of Anglo-Saxon and Norman-French when the word appears in the Halliwell manuscript, spelled *Logge*. It is evident that the double letter was inserted to indicate the short sound of the vowel O, but possibly in imitation of the Italian *Loggia* as a well known technical term in architecture. But there was still a little ambiguity as to the pronunciation of the G, on account of that letter already representing two sounds in English, and to avoid this ambiguity the D was inserted, by which according to the general analogy of the language the pronunciation could not be mistaken, either as to the vowel or consonant sounds.

Symbolic Masonry has evolved the study and development of a system of philosophy based upon tropes and emblems and illustrated by myths and allegory; and it therefore turns out that the very foundation word of Masonry as an organization furnishes one of its most profound symbols. The Lodge is the place and the assembly is the environment in which we study the *Word*; not alone the Word of God, as we denominate the Holy Bible, but the Supreme Intelligence, God Himself, as in-

dicated in the expression "the Word was God," or "God was the *Word*."

In the first degree the tyro is taught through the specific word of the degree that God is infinite in power, omnipotent; in the second, that He is established and unchangeable throughout all time and all space, infinitely and forever, and in the third that the Supreme Word, as revealing God in His very person, cannot be known or given to us in this life nor until the Temple shall have been completed and dedicated and the Craft called from their labors to enjoy an eternal Sabbath of rest; that in the meantime we must continue to labor and wait patiently for the Great Day of the future and content ourselves for the present with a partial and imperfect knowledge of divine things, represented by the substitute word. In words of Holy Writ, "here we see as through a glass, darkly; there we shall see Him face to face."



The Substitute Word

For many long years, fifty-two of which I have been a Royal Arch Mason, I wondered and pondered over the substitute word as it was communicated to me in the third degree of Masonry. I ransacked the encyclopedias and found definitions of what was supposed to be its component parts, taken from the Hebrew language, but could never make good nonsense out of those definitions. It always seemed to me that the founders of the ritual, whoever they may have been, must have had some coherent idea of fitness in formulating the word, but the definitions given by syllables failed to convey any idea of relevancy or coherence. As every Master Mason knows, the ritual indicates that before the final assembly of the Craft for the ceremony of raising, the chief officer in the legend was sorely grieved by the fear that the real word was lost to the Craft; that he had already decided in his mind that a substitute for it must be adopted until future generations might discover the right one. We must assume also that the substitute was not a haphazard, impulsive thing, but was carefully premeditated. The piecemeal definitions found in the encyclopedias, when combined to explain the meaning of the substitute word, constitute nothing more than an unpremeditated ejaculation of surprise on the spur of the moment, inconsistent with the ritual and possessing no worthy significance.

In the course of years I have delved into the subject whenever and wherever I thought I might find a little light on it, with the result that some years ago I fell upon a hypothesis that has proved to be a good working basis, whether I am right in my inferences or not. That hypothesis was, that the original substitute was not taken from the Hebrew language at all. If the founders of the ritual of the third degree were men of reflection, which we must of course presume, it must have occurred to them that if they adopted any Hebrew word or combination of Hebrew words as a substitute for the sacred and ineffable word that bore any relative profound significance, the craft all understood the Semitic tongue, even if a large portion of them were from Tyre and spoke Phenician

instead of Hebrew, for they were merely variants of the same language. If they were permitted to perceive and understand the meaning of the substitute, and that substitute meant substantially the same as the original true word, they would thus have been admitted into the significance of the Great Secret, regardless of the communication of the sacred word itself. To avoid anachronisms and anomalies of this kind, it would be necessary to select the substitute from some language with which the mass of workers were not familiar. Solomon, according to Biblical tradition, was one of the most learned men of his age, and his association and communication with non-Semitic nations made him acquainted with their languages. To be consistent in withholding from the craft the true word or any clue to the meaning thereof, he would have been assumed to make use of his broad knowledge to formulate a substitute that would not reveal the nature of the original, and yet in some way would have a significance suggestive of the original to those who were in possession of it. To accomplish this, it would be proper and expedient to select the substitute word from some tongue not related to the Hebrew. We know that another family of languages existed then and still exists entirely unlike the Semitic tongues in its fundamental structure, and that it had already spread over a great part of the known world through the predominance of the empire of the Medes and Persians. We also know that notwithstanding this difference in language, the devotees of the religion of the Hebrews were more cordial and friendly with them than with other foreign peoples on account of their agreement in a monotheistic faith and in forbidding all images representing or intending to represent Deity.

Independent of all this hypothetical structure however, I have arrived at a conviction that the original substitute word was taken from the Aryan, either Persian or Indian. This conclusion was formed only by rejecting entirely the present mode of recognition as a mysterious and unintelligible combination interpreted only by a strained and haphazard throwing to-

gether of three Hebrew words which have no significant relation to each other or to the true word. But it was not until recent years, with the publication of the results of scholarly research in both Masonic and non-Masonic fields that I found sufficient data to confirm my theory with considerable force. One of the most important of these publications is a passage in Prof. Roscoe Pound's little volume on Masonic Jurisprudence, from which I quote a brief excerpt relating to the subject in hand:

Again, we are taught not to be dogmatic when we note that a distinct substitute word has prevailed in many parts of the world and may possibly go back to Jacobite Masons in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Even if we do not accept the view that "macbenac" is *Mac Benach* (blessed is the son) and is an allusion to the Pretender, the prevalence of this distinct word puts a heavy burden of proof upon those who would assert the immemoriality and universality of our present mode of recognition. If we suppose it to be a corruption analogous to "Peter Gower" and "Naymus Graecus," when we put our substitute word of four syllables (pronounced as three) beside "macbenac" and the mysterious "Maughbin" of operative manuscripts, we may well wonder whether we have anything more than a clever working into Hebrew of a corrupt word hopelessly lost, or an eighteenth century endeavor to make a word worthy of the occasion.

Comparing this with my previous notes, I was irresistibly led to the conclusion that the mysterious "maughbin" mentioned above as found among the old operative Masons was much nearer the original substitute than our present form, and that the latter is, as Prof. Pound says, nothing more "than a clever working into Hebrew of a corrupt word hopelessly lost." As I am not attempting to give any etymology or definition of the current word I shall not be violating any obligation of secrecy in discussing "maughbin" and "macbenac," with a view of accounting for them only, leaving the reader to form his own conclusions.

My theory stated briefly as introductory to the evidence to be adduced is, that the original substitute word crudely spelled "maugh-bin" was chosen by the founders of the ritual because it was susceptible of two different applications in its interpretation: 1, To signify the essential meaning of the lost word; 2, To signify the general character of the principal hero of the epic. To this view I now address my argument.

The first syllable *Maugh* has in fact but one surplus letter not contained in the original Persian, which I assume was *Magh*, meaning "great," or "grand." As there is no sound in English representing this *Gh*, the root *Magh* is usually rendered *Mah*, *Meh*, *Mag*, or *Maz* in English translation, as the following references will show:

Among the Indo-European roots in the introduction to Webster's International Dictionary is *Mec*, *Mezh*, meaning to be able, or to be strong. Derivatives in various languages, both ancient and modern are given including *Mega* in Greek and *Mah* in Sanscrit, meaning to be great.

In Rawlinson's Seven Great Monarchies he says of the word *Mazares* that it presents us with the root *Meh*, meaning much, or great, adding that the same root is found in *Maspii*, a Persian tribe meaning Big Horses, while *Mazares* means great or much gold.

In the Dabistan we are told that in Balkh where now is the sanctuary of the Imam, formerly stood a temple called *Mahin Azar*, meaning Great Fire.

The Century Dictionary under the word *Mage* derives it from Latin *Magus*, plural *Magi*, from Greek *Magos*, plural *Magoi*, one of the *Magi* or *Magians*, a Median tribe or caste, the priests and wise men of the ancient Medes and Persians, probably from the Zend *Maz*, meaning great.

Andrew's Latin Lexicon gives a number of words, as *Mag-nus*, comparative *Major*, superlative *Maximus*, also *Macto*, deriving them all from a root *Mag* meaning great, and gives as illustrations *Majus Deus*, Great God, that is, Jupiter, and *Dea Maia*, meaning the great goddess.

In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, Jeremiah 3:13, one of Nebuchadnezzar's officers is called the *Rab-Mag*, meaning Great Rabbi.

In Heron-Allen's analysis of Fitzgerald's 101st quatrain, he refers it to Rubaiyat 84 of the Ouseley manuscript, and gives a prose translation of which the third line reads: "Where the cup-bearer serves in his hands the *Mugh* wine." Explaining

Magh, he says it is *Maghana* in the original, and came to be a synonym for age, superiority, excellence, in which sense it is to be understood in the quatrain.

Whinfield's poetical rendering of the Rubaiyats gives the same line thus in heroic pentameter: "While your cup-bearer pours your old *Magh* wine."

As is well known, *Maha* or *Mahat* is modern Hindoo for "great," and enter into both common and proper nouns frequently, as *Mahanuddy*, "the Great river," *Maharajah*, "great ruler," while *Mahabharata* is the great epic of Sanscrit literature.

Chambers' Encyclopedia, edition of 1880, gives the following concerning *Magi*:

The origin of this term has recently been brought to light by Assyrian scholars. In Accadian, the language of the early Scythian or Turanian inhabitants of Babylonia and Media, "imga" signifies "august," "reverend," and was the title of their learned and priestly caste. These Accadians had made great advances in astronomy, or, rather, astrology, and were much addicted to divination and similar mysterious arts.

The Semitic nations, afterwards dominant in Babylonia and Assyria, adopted not only the learning, and many of the religious observances of the early inhabitants, but also a number of the special forms, and among others the name for the learned caste, modifying it to suit their own articulation; and out of the Semitic form the Greeks made *Magus*, (plural *Magoi*.)

Combining all the authorities cited in the foregoing paragraphs, to which many others might be added if needed, we may fairly infer that the first syllable of "maugh-bin" means "great" or "grand," a very natural and frequent expression in Masonry as in Grand Master, Grand Architect, etc., and that it was taken from some form of the Indo-Iranic root *Magh*. This may have been a single syllable, as the Persian *Magh*, or two syllables, as in the Hindoo *Maha* or *Magha*, keeping in mind the sonant guttural sound attributed to the G already alluded to in my discussion of *Lodge*, but which, if spoken in a whisper, would not be a sonant but an aspirate.

But what of the last syllable? For many years I was puzzled to find any word outside of Hebrew that would fit in satisfactorily with *Magh* or *Magha* to reconstruct a possible corruption of the original substitute. A few years ago I found

a word derived by the lexicographers from the Persian, *Ban*, in connection with certain districts of Croatia, meaning the "ruler;" and the word *Banate*, applied to the territory of the ban's jurisdiction. It seemed at first glance as if I had found the key to the problem, but I was totally at a loss to find any authority to synchronize it with *Magh* in the limited library resources at my command. My first additional discovery some time later was two small towns in India named *Mahaban* and it was clear that the first four letters of this name meant "great" according to the analogies of other Hindoo words, and if the last syllable was the Persian *Ban* already mentioned above, it must mean "Great Ruler," or "Grand Master." All this however, was only crude guessing, as I still had failed to find thus far among the discussions of Indo-Persian scholars any reference to such a word, either in connection with the inscriptions or with ancient Persian or Sanscrit writings.

But Prof. F. C. Burkitt of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1925 published a somewhat sensational account of "The Religion of the Manichees," obtaining his data from some important recent discoveries in Chinese Turkestan of a large collection of fragments of Manicheean literature, in which the word *Ban* comes to the front as one of leading significance. The pronunciation is that of the long broad A, as in our English word "barn," with the R left out.

This religion laid its foundation upon two roots, *Light* and *Dark*, and three moments, *present*, *past* and *future*. The realm of *Light* was presided over by the "Father of Greatness," who was the supreme deity. He had as aides three subordinate cons or deities, "The Friend of the Lights," the "Great Ban," and the "Living Spirit." The battle of the cosmos is being continually waged between the powers of *Light* and those of *Darkness*. As the Dark elements are gradually conquered, it is the province of the Great Ban, which means "Great Builder," or "Grand Architect," to build a wall or barrier, within which they are perpetually imprisoned. When the last of the enemies of *Light* shall be defeated and

imprisoned within this structure the war will be over and the cosmic world will thereafter be at peace.

It may be pertinent to add that Manicheism, formally promulgated by Mani in A. D., 243, grew so rapidly that in less than a century it became one of Christianity's strongest rivals, subsisting and having followers for a thousand years, finally disappearing about the fourteenth century, although persecuted by Christians, Zoroastrians and Mohammedans alike to the death. It put forth a vast quantity of literature, many fragments of which are included in the recent discoveries above mentioned, despite the efforts of its persecutors to destroy all of its writings.

The point of all this is, that the word *Ban* must have been familiar among Indo-Iranian peoples for many generations, and especially so from about the fourth century, and there was ample time during the centuries intervening between the beginnings of Manicheism and the first appearance of Freemasonry as an institution for the word to have made its way to the west, particularly among the builders of the middle ages.

This inference is considerably strengthened by the fact that a sect of Zoroastrianism now having organizations in the United States called *Mazdaznan* boldly make the charge that Freemasonry borrowed freely from their religion about the time of Anquetil du Perron when he translated the *Zend-Avesta* and published it near the close of the third quarter of the 18th century. They specify particularly the rite of ablution, the acacia, the all-seeing eye, the apron, the cock, the sheaf of wheat, the annual feast, the sacred numbers three, five, seven and nine, the white color and the six periods. This, of course does not solve the question of the origin of the substitute word, but as quite a number of Masonic scholars take the position that the Master's degree as a separate grade was not known in the fraternity until 1777, among whom are included Hughan, Murray-Lyon, Hawkin and others, this latter date fits in pretty accurately with the allegations of *Mazdaznan*.

CONCLUSION

I therefore submit my theory to the intelligent fraternity, based upon the foregoing data, that the word as originally adopted by the old operatives and spelled *Maughbin* was *Magh-Ban*, and probably later *Magha-Ban*, making it a word of three syllables instead of two; that the communication of the word in a whisper instead of in an audible voice converted it from a vocal guttural to the German spirant guttural, as in the German interjection "ach;" that this guttural sound being foreign to the English vernacular, the nearest they could come to pronouncing it correctly was the simple aspirate represented by the English letter H, which would have assimilated it to the name of the two villages in India already mentioned, *Mahaban*, all three syllables given the continental sound of A in *Bar*, or in *Barn*; that to those who introduced it and understood its derivation it meant the same as the Manichaean *Magh-Ban*, "Great Builder," and was applied to Deity as the Creator of all things, and at the same time by a double entendre expressing the character of the hero of the third degree legend. This interpretation gives the word a fitness for the occasion in the highest possible sense as carrying two ideas of (a) the search of the human heart after the *Eternal Word* on the one hand, and (b) of the skill, devotion and fidelity of the illustrious dead on the other.

One can only conjecture as to the other word which was for a while used by one section of the fraternity instead of the above, *Mac-Ben-Ac*. But it would seem probable that the vowel sounds were the same, with the hard sound of the English K substituted for the vocal aspirate in the first and last syllables. All efforts at Hebrew interpretation of this combination fail except the far-fetched one that it is of Jacobin origin and meant "blessed is the son," in honor of the Pretender to the British throne. Even in this rendering it is uncertain whether the first syllable means "blessed" or "smitten." A more plausible theory is found in the hypothesis that when the old

form of initiation was changed from a two-part system to one of three parts in 1738, the friction which resulted in the Order from this change and resulted at last in the schism between the "Ancients" and the "Moderns," one of these factions changed the order of the syllables, putting the last second and the second last, to prevent being imposed upon by the membership of the other faction.

At any rate, there is an approach of general agreement that the third degree as we know it now, or any semblance of elaboration corresponding to our present ritual, was not in use until 1777; and this brings the work down to a time subsequent to Anquetil du Perron's translation and publication of the Zend Avesta for the first time in any language of the West. In the very nature of the case, the obligation of secrecy was felt so strongly that no record was made of the details of change made when the three degrees or parts were undoubtedly elaborated into something resembling their present form. It is known that two distinct forms of the word were in use in England from 1747 to 1813, when the "Ancients" and the "Moderns" consolidated. It may be that the current form of the present day was a compromise on the usage of both factions. It would have been a minor matter of agreement, inasmuch as nobody at that time probably knew either the form or meaning of the original.

So far as I know, the views presented here are original. They are at any rate evolved from my own studies, and I have never seen anything in Masonic literature hinting at them. Whether based upon fact or not, they are plausible. If a sifting of the facts by future scholars far more able and better equipped than myself shall establish their truth, I shall feel that my Masonic life has not been lived altogether in vain; if, on the other hand, a better theory shall be found more in accordance with historical facts, I shall rejoice with the discoverers and relegate my own notions to the limbo of a forgotten past. So mote it be!